

As I was preparing for this budget presentation, my original inclination was to focus on four topics:

- Where we are in the Neighborhood Policing Plan
- The impact of current fiscal realities
- Promising developments
- How we will move forward

My Neighborhood Policing Plan focus was justified, in my mind, by its link to a central component of the proposed budget, the holding of 26 sworn vacancies in 2012, and what expectations the public might have in light of this. NPP is an outcome-based model that has provided the touchstones and challenges to our assumptions that have shaped and honed our decision-making and our performance. We have exceeded our goals, by averaging 6.3 minute response to emergency calls for service and having proactive time available in Patrol in excess of the 30% called for in the Plan.

My plan was further to describe how, having met our NPP goals, we have begun more and more to view our sworn resources holistically to accomplish the overall objective of the Plan, basically to deploy officers when and where they are needed. I was going to cite as a prime example, our decision to deploy some Patrol resources as dedicated proactive forces in the form of foot, horse, and bike beats. These highly visible, proactive resources serve not only to respond to 911 calls for service, but also to reassure the public, which has welcomed and expressed satisfaction with their presence, where deployed.

I also planned to discuss how our capacity to sustain NPP performance has benefited from the strategic deployment of non-Patrol resources such as Gang, Narcotics and SWAT officers and in the use of ACT and CPT officers, for special emphases at times and places with high call volumes.

By focusing on the current fiscal realities embedded in the proposed 2012 budget, I intended to be clear that this current proposal is, in fact, less draconian than available alternatives. My plan was to underscore the difficulties and realities presented by pauses in sworn hiring and in holding vacancies. In particular, I had decided to lay out in some detail our resumption of hiring plan in 2012, which includes hiring off our existing register and additional testing. These steps are designed to help us hire as quickly as possible while remaining well aware of the very real budgetary concerns still on the horizon.

Despite the leaner staffing and less plentiful resources available in this and previous budgets, I was planning to underscore the many promising initiatives and developments designed to fight crime, reduce fear and build community that are underway in SPD. I was going to do this by profiling such examples as: LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion of drug offenders), DARPA (development of cutting edge public engagement training), Investigations Procedures Project and Procedural Justice (curriculum development to guide public contacts). I was also planning to detail the many efforts we have launched to listen to and learn from the people we serve and how these are paying dividends not only in helping to build

community, but also in fighting crime. In this latter regard, I wanted to note, for example, how our ties to the community had averted a significant terrorist incident that would have targeted local military personnel. I would also have mentioned that our strong service focus leads us to continually assess the quality of our 911 response and that this year we have received the highest ever ratings by 911 callers surveyed.

I had planned to conclude my presentation by acknowledging that in the last few years, as we have faced financial difficulties, we have benefitted from a favorable public safety environment. I would have noted the decline in Major Crimes as well as less serious Part II crimes over recent years (both are off around 15% from the ten-year average). I believe that some of the deployment decisions previously outlined likely contributed to these outcomes. I planned to end by assuring you that we will continue to test and deploy our resources in a strategic fashion using evidence-based approaches.

This was – in a nutshell - my plan. But the more I considered where we have come and where we are today, I realized that this is just not another budget for another budget year. My sense is that we are at a critical moment in time. As Chief of Police, it is my job to lie awake and worry about what is out there, so other people can get a good night's rest. And what I see on the horizon are some concerning trends and uncertainties that, I fear, will be absent from our budget discussions. Let me share just a few of these with you.

First, the impacts of current financial stresses are already evident in many of our crime statistics, particularly in domestic violence. What we are now beginning to see is how the toll of reversals in the global economy is being played out in the streets. The unrest in London this summer, and similar incidents closer to home in Vancouver, BC and on Wall Street in New York this week, suggest that unless the economic picture begins to improve soon, ongoing civil unrest is a distinct possibility. We will plan to be ready for this possibility.

Next, as recently averted terrorism incidents locally and those occurring across the world have made clear, there remain those whose objectives are to create chaos and to exploit political unrest and economic shortages for their own ends. As a democratic society we are challenged to protect ourselves in ways that retain our freedoms and rights while keeping us safe. This underscores the increased importance of our continued efforts to strengthen our bonds with the communities we serve.

Last I would mention the so-called “war on government” that appears to intensify daily and which, to my mind, is little more than a veiled attack on the most helpless, hopeless and vulnerable in our society - the people who rely most on government just to survive. While they seem to be the primary targets, this so-called war is also an attack on the rest of the community who depend on government to secure for us, our families and our businesses, a civil and civilized society. The result is the dismantling of the social safety net and the collapse of social service systems that are part and parcel of the fabric of our community. Public and private shelters, service agencies and charitable organizations are strained to their

limits, and bracing for the prospect of having fewer resources to spread among more and more people in need.

We have for some time adopted a broad view of what is termed “public safety” to include the entire network of public and private responders to those in need of emergency help. The Mayor, in particular, has shown great leadership in encouraging city Department heads to work together and to collaborate actively with other public and private partners. Nevertheless, as others face reversals, we will be dramatically affected. Potential shortfalls in the state’s budget, for example, may end or reduce programs such as the NCI teams, an invaluable program to address many on our streets who are both especially vulnerable and particularly problematic.

So we can argue and debate various deployment options and decisions the Department has made and may undertake in 2012. We can speculate on outcomes associated with holding sworn vacancies, laying off officers or adopting other budgetary strategies to meet current exigencies. We can and should have challenging and thoughtful discussions about which policing theories and frameworks constitute best practices and should be pursued. [I would note that the Department has already benefitted from research collaborations locally and across the country that have focused on policing issues and looks forward to more such efforts.]

No matter how thoughtful our discussions and debates may be, however, should any or all of the above scenarios reach extremes, circumstances will require us to shift gears and readjust our priorities to face a challenging and changing landscape. This is where our capacity as a Department – and as a City – to be flexible and responsive will become paramount.

While these thoughts provide me with sleepless nights, I do retain a cautious optimism. It stems from my knowledge of our Police Department, and is based on the following:

- The men and women of SPD are the most creative, innovative, dedicated and energetic group of law enforcement professionals any city could hope to have.
- We are a resilient and nimble organization that is constantly reevaluating and adjusting in the face of changing circumstances.
- We are highly engaged in our collaborative initiatives and find that our investments in them are continually being reinforced and justified.
- We are committed fully to our performance objectives and to our larger goals of fighting crime, reducing fear and building community and will not retreat from making the changes necessary to make these a reality.

Finally, Seattle is a generous and compassionate city filled with people of good will and intention. As we confront the current challenges and potential crises happening all around, it is my hope that, rather than tearing us apart, these difficulties will bring out the best in us all.